



CHIEF OFFICERS OF STATE LIBRARY AGENCIES

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July 13, 2011

Ms. Marlene Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: Connect America Fund - WC Docket No. 10-90
A National Broadband Plan for Our Future – GN Docket No. 09-51
High-Cost Universal Service Support – WC Docket No. 05-337

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On behalf of the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA), I respectfully write in support of the comments submitted in this proceeding by the Schools, Health and Libraries Broadband (SHLB) Coalition to enhance the broadband capabilities of community anchor institutions in rural areas. COSLA is a national organization comprised of the chief officers of state and territorial agencies designated as the state library administrative agency and responsible for statewide library development. There are over 9,000 public libraries in the United States with over 16,000 locations.

The current proceeding to reform the High-Cost Fund and to create a new Connect America Fund focused on broadband deployment in rural areas provides an important opportunity for the FCC to ensure that anchor institutions are able to serve the needs of their rural populations. We understand and agree with the desire to build broadband networks to residential consumers in rural areas; however, we respectfully suggest that the needs of community anchor institutions are just as important.

Our members work with the public libraries in each state to provide Americans with essential services, such as free access to computers and the Internet. Two-thirds (67 percent) of U.S. public libraries report that they are the only provider of free public access to computers and the Internet in their communities but the number jumps to 72.8% in rural areas. The great majority (89%) of libraries provide formal or informal technology training, including classes in computer skills, software use and online job seeking.

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Community anchor institutions often need much higher-capacity broadband services than those that are typically provided to residential consumers.

The National Broadband Plan established as a national goal that “every American community should have affordable access to at least 1 gigabit per second broadband service to anchor institutions. . . .” By requiring those companies who receive financial support to build rural broadband networks to provide affordable, high-capacity broadband to anchor institutions, the FCC will go a long way toward achieving this goal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lamar Veatch". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lamar Veatch
State Librarian
Georgia Public Library Service